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Collection charges on checks, notes, drafts, acceptances, etc., through Webster and Atlas National Bank of Boston and other banks and trust companies affiliated with the Boston clearing house association. (Boston: Pinkham Press. 1918. Pp. 221.)

Facing the facts. (Washington: National War Savings Committee. 1918. Pp. 3.)

Discusses by question and answer the need of saving in order to provide for the enormous sums needed by the government.

Market prices appearing currently in technical and trade journals. (Pittsburgh: Carnegie Library. 1918. Pp. 6.)

War prices and house rents. Statistics showing (1) wholesale and retail prices, and (2) house rents, at the end of December, 1917, as compared with the pre-war level (July, 1914), August, 1915, 1916, and 1917, with an introductory note. (Calcutta: Supt. Gov. Prtg. 1918. Pp. 39. 2s.)

Wartime changes in the cost of living. Research report no. 9. (Boston: Nat. Indus. Conf. Board. 1918. Pp. 78.)

Public Finance, Taxation, and Tariff

The State Tax Commission: A Study of the Development and Results of State Control over the Assessment of Property for Taxation. By HARLEY LEIST LUTZ. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1918. Pp. ix, 673. \$2.75.)

Professor Lutz's book on *The State Tax Commission* is the most important contribution thus far made by students of state and local taxation in the United States. It is a valuable addition to the splendid series of Harvard Economic Studies and well merits the distinction of having been awarded the David A. Wells prize for the year 1915-16.

Approximately three fourths of the American commonwealths now have a tax commissioner or a state tax commission. The work of these the author has studied intensively for several years, his inquiry taking him into most of the states for first-hand investigation. The volume under review presents the results of the studies made in some thirty states.

The state tax commission has grown out of the effort to solve the numerous problems connected with the general property tax and represents the latest stage in the development of a more or less centralized tax administration. Following, as the commission did, upon provision for the local review and equalization of assessments, state equalization, and state assessment of some of the more important public utilities, the author reviews the evolution of centralized administration in taxation and state boards of

equalization and assessments in chapters I, II, and III. Then, after a discussion of the organization and equipment of tax commissions, fourteen chapters are devoted to the office in thirty of the thirty-four states in which it was found at the time the book was published. A final chapter (XIX) brings together the author's conclusions, and a bibliography and index complete the volume.

Each tax commission is studied as it functions, perhaps as a reviewing and equalizing body, perhaps also as the original assessor of certain kinds of property, as the advisor of the legislative branch of the government, and as the supervisor of the local assessors. Inasmuch as the tax commission has played a conspicuous part in tax reform in recent years, almost every phase of taxation is discussed and with excellent results. Naturally administrative questions are kept in the foreground, and the book will doubtless be of great assistance in shifting the attention of students from questions of justice rather detached from the concrete situation to real problems as they have developed.

The reviewer may claim familiarity with taxation in California, Kansas, Indiana, and Illinois, and finds all of the details presented for these states to be accurate. His feeling is that the entire investigation has been made most carefully and that the writer has shown unusually good judgment. Moreover, the reviewer accepts all of the author's conclusions, among them one in favor of a commission with power to control the making of assessments by suggestion, cancellation and the making of new assessments, and, if necessary, the removal of inefficient or wrong-minded assessors; another against the so-called principle of separation most conspicuously developed in California; a third to the effect that the question of the superiority of gross earnings or of ad valorem taxes in the case of public utilities is to be decided largely by the circumstances under which they are employed; a fourth that placing the selection of local assessors in the hands of a state official or the tax commission is of doubtful wisdom.

Students of taxation and those having to do with tax administration or legislation will be repaid for a careful reading of Professor Lutz's book. Librarians who wish to collect the publications of tax commissions, permanent or special, will find the bibliography helpful, though it fails to give a few references which should not have been overlooked.

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